

The Buchanshire Tragedy ; or Sir James the Rofs.

(To the Tune of GILL MORICE).

OF all the Scottish northern chiefs
of high and warlike name,
The bravest was Sir James the Rofs,
a knight of mickle fame,
His growth was like the tufted fir,
that crowns the mountain brow,
And waving o'er his shoulders broad
his locks of yellow flew.
The chieftain of the brave clan Rofs,
a firm undaunted band,
Five hundred warriors drew the sword
beneath his high command.
In bloody fight thrice had he stood,
against the English keen,
Ere two and twenty opening springs
his blooming youth had seen.
The fair Matilda dear he lov'd
a maid of beauty rare;
Even Margaret on the Scottish throne,
was never half so fair.
Lang had he woo'd, lang she refus'd,
with seeming scorn and pride;
Yet oft her eyes confess'd the love,
her faithful tongue deny'd.
At last she blest'd his well try'd faith,
allow'd his tender claim;
She vow'd to him her virgin heart,
and own'd an equal flame.
Her father, Buchan's cruel lord,
her passion disapprov'd,
And bid her wed Sir John the Græme,
and leave the youth she lov'd.
At night they met as they were wont,
deep in the shady wood,
Where on a bank, beside the burn,
a blooming saugh tree stood,
Conceal'd among the under wood,
the crafty Donald lay,
(The brother of Sir John the Græme)
to hear what they might say.
When thus the maid began, My fire,
your passion disapproves,
And bids me wed Sir John the Græme,
so here must end our loves!
My father's will must be obey'd
nought boots to me withstand,
Some fairer maid in beauty's bloom
shall blest thee with her hand.
Matilda soon shall be forgot,
and from thy mind defac'd;
But may that happiness be thine
which I can never taste.
What do I hear? Is this thy vow?
Sir James the Rofs replied,
And will Matilda wed the Græme,
tho' sworn to be my bride?
His sword shall sooner pierce my heart,
than 'reave me of thy charms,
Then clasp'd her to his beating breast,
fast lock'd into his arms.
I spake to try thy love she said,
I'll ne'er wed man but thee;
My grave shall be my bridal bed,
e'er Græme my husband be;
Take then dear youth, this faithful kiss,
in witness of my troth,
And every plague become my lot
that day I break my oath.
They parted thus, the sun was set,
up hasty Donald flies,
And turn thee, turn thee, heedless youth,
he loud insulting cries.
Soon turn'd about the fearless chief,

and soon his sword he drew;
For Donald's blade before his breast,
had pierc'd his tartans throw.
This for my brother's slighted love,
his wrongs sit on my arm,
Three paces back the youth retir'd
and sav'd himself frae harm.
Returning swift his hand he rear'd
frae Donald's head above,
And thro' the brains and crashing bones,
his sharp edg'd weapon drove,
He staggering reel'd, then tumbled down,
a lump of breathless clay;
So fall my foes quo' valiant Rofs,
and stately strode away,
Thro' the green wood he quickly hy'd,
unto Lord Buchan's hall,
And at Matilda's window stood,
and thus began to call.
Art thou asleep Matilda dear?
awake, my love awake,
Thy luckless lover calls to thee,
a long farewell to take.
For I have slain fierce Donald Græme,
his blood is on my sword,
And distant are my faithful men,
nor can assist their lord.
To Sky I'll now direct my way,
where my two brother's bide.
And raise the valiant of the isles
to combat on my side.
O do not so the maid replies,
with me till morning stay,
For dark and dreary is the night
and dangerous is the way.
All night I'll watch you in the park.
my faithful page I'll send
To run and raise the Rofs's clan,
their master to defend.
Beneath a bush he laid him down
and wrapt him in his plaid,
While trembling for her lover's fate
at distance stood the maid.
Swift ran the page o'er hill and dale,
till in a lowly glen,
He met the furious Sir John Græme,
with twenty of his men.
Where go'st thou little page, he said
so late who did thee send?
I go to raise the Rofs's clan,
their master to defend.
For he hath slain fierce Donald Græme,
his blood is on his sword.
And far, far distant are his men,
nor can assist their lord.
And has he slain my brother dear?
the furious Græme replies,
Dishonour blast my name! but he
by me ere morning dies!
Tell me where is Sir James the Rofs?
I will thee well reward,
He sleeps into lord Buchan's park,
Matilda is his guard.
They spur'd their steeds in furious mood,
and scour'd along the ley,
They reach'd lord Buchan's lofty tow'rs
by dawning of the day.
Matilda stood without the gate,
to whom the Græme did say,
Saw ye James the Rofs, last night?
or did he pass this way?
Last day at noon, Matilda said,
Sir James the Rofs pass'd by.

He furiously prick'd his weary steed,
and onward fast did hey,
By this time he's at Edinburgh,
if horse and man hold good.
Your page then lied, who said, he was
now sleeping in the wood,
She wrung her hands and tore her hair,
brave Rofs thou art betray'd
And ruin'd by the means (she cried)
from whence I hop'd thine aid.
By this, the valiant knight awak'd,
the virgins' cries he heard,
And up he rose and drew his sword,
when the fierce band appear'd.
Your sword last night my brother slew,
his blood yet dims its shine,
And ere the rising of the sun
your blood shall reek on mine.
You word it well the chief return'd,
but deeds approve the man;
Set by your men and hand to hand,
'we'll try what valour can,
Oft boasting hides a coward's heart,
my weighty sword you fear,
Which shone in front in Flodden field,
when yours kept in the rear.
With dauntless step he forward strode
and dar'd him to the fight,
The Græme gave back and fear'd his arm,
for well he knew his might.
four of his men the bravest four,
sunk down beneath his sword,
But still he scorn'd his base revenge,
and fought their haughty lord.
Behind him basely came the Græme,
and wounded in the side;
Out spouting came the purple tide,
and all his tartans dy'd
But yet his sword ne'er quat the grip,
nor dropt he to the ground,
Till through his enemy's heart his steel
had forc'd a mortal wound.
Græme like a tree by wind o'erthrown
fell breathless on the clay,
And down beside him sunk the Rofs,
and faint and dying lay.
The sad Matilda saw him fall;
O spare his life she cried:
Lord Buchan's daughter craves his life
let her not be deny'd.
Her well known voice the hero heard.
he rais'd his death clos'd eyes,
And fix'd them on the weeping maid
and weakly thus replies.
In vain Matilda begs the life,
by death's arrest deny'd,
My race is run Adieu my love,
then clos'd his eyes, and dy'd.
The sword yet warm from his left side,
with frantic hand she drew,
I come Sir James the Rofs she cries,
I come to follow you.
She leant the hilt against the ground,
and bar'd her snowy breast;
Then fell upon her lover's face
and sunk to endless rest.
Then by this fatal tragedy,
let parents warning take,
And ne'er entice their children dear
their sacred vows to break.

F I N I S.
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